



Suicide Safety Policy

September 2020

Statement of Purpose

Airedale Junior School is a community that is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people; as a school we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide. We want to make sure that children and young people at our school are as suicide safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, pupils themselves and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a suicide-safer school/college.

Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents

Airedale Junior School acknowledges that suicidal thoughts are common among young people and we recognise that every suicide is a tragedy. There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person. However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help prevent future deaths.

We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to help seeking and a barrier to offering help. Airedale Junior School is committed to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos. This will include avoiding the use of language which perpetuates unhelpful notions that suicide is criminal, sinful or selfish. We know that unhelpful myths and misconceptions surrounding suicide can inhibit young people in seeking and finding appropriate help when it is most needed.

As a school community, we recognise that pupils may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to play our part in supporting any pupil who may have thoughts of suicide.

We know that pupils who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicide behaviours). School children experiencing suicidal thoughts are potentially at risk of acting on these thoughts. Those who are already engaging in suicide behaviours are also clearly at risk of death or harm. Airedale Junior School wants to work with our pupils who may be thinking about suicide, or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, sometimes working in partnership with family, carers and other professionals where this may enhance suicide safety.

We know that a child or young person who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will equip our staff with the skills to identify when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. These adults will be trained to keep our young people suicide-safe.

We will provide our pupils with opportunities to speak openly about their worries with people who are ready, willing and able to support them. We want to make it possible for our children and those who support them at Airedale Junior School to do so safely. This will be in a way that leads to support and help where this is needed. We will do all we can to refrain from acting in a way that stops a pupil seeking the help they need when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Our Team and their Responsibilities

Our safeguarding team and school governors will be clear about how we as a school community will respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our safeguarding team will have a defined responsibility within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media.

We will have a clear picture of who has received general suicide awareness education and commit to this being refreshed periodically (at least every three years). We will identify a team of people who are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

We will have a clear policy about how staff should work together where thoughts of suicide or suicide behaviours are known among our young people. We will manage the sharing of information in a way that enhances safety.

Guidance

Suicide prevention: developing a local action plan

www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention/developing-a-local-action-plan

Preventing suicide: lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-suicide/lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-young-people

Suicide prevention: identifying and responding to suicide clusters

www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention/identifying-and-responding-to-suicide-clusters

Suicide prevention: suicides in public places

www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention/suicides-in-public-places

Support after a suicide: a guide to providing local services

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-after-a-suicide-a-guide-to-providing-local-services>

Policy

Suicide prevention strategy for England

www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-preventionstrategy-for-england

Suicide prevention: third annual report

www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-preventionthird-annual-report